

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03  
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06  
COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 /071 W  
-----271615Z 068577 /45

R 271506Z JAN 77  
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9956  
INFO AMCONSUL EDINBURGH  
AMCONSUL BELFAST

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 01489

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, UK  
SUBJECT: LABOR MOVES TO COUNTER MARXIST PENETRATION

REF: (A) LONDON 20060(76) (B) LONDON 0634 (C) LONDON  
20381 (76)

SUMMARY. THE LABOR PARTY'S NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (NEC) HAS DECIDED TO REVIEW THE LONG-PENDING REPORT ON EXTREME LEFTIST PENETRATION OF THE PARTY, AND ESTABLISHED AN AD HOC COMMITTEE TO THIS END. THE MAKE UP OF THE COMMITTEE SUGGESTS THAT IT WILL RECOMMEND ACTION TO COUNTER THE THREAT. OTHER DEVELOPMENTS OVER THE PAST WEEK, WITH ONE NOTABLE EXCEPTION, HAVE BEEN FAVORABLE FOR THE MODERATES. ALTHOUGH THE NEC, IN A SPECIAL MEETING, RECONFIRMED TROTSKYITE ANDY BEVAN AS YOUTH ORGANIZER, RIGHT-WING EDUCATION SECRETARY SHIRLEY WILLIAMS LAUNCHED A BLISTERING ATTACK ON UNDEMOCRATIC ELEMENTS SEEKING TO PENETRATE THE PARTY, AND RIGHT-WING LABOR MP NEVILLE SANDELSON BEAT BACK EXTREMIST ATTEMPTS TO DENY HIM RENOMINATION. JOAN MAYNARD, MP, A FAR LEFTIST APOLOGIST ON THE NEC, ALSO CAME UNDER ATTACK FROM HER SPONSORING UNION AT ITS ANNUAL MEETING. WHILE IT IS  
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STILL TOO EARLY TO PASS JUDGEMENT, IT APPEARS THAT LABOR MODERATES, AIDED BY THE UNIONS, ARE BEGINNING TO CHALLENGE EXTREME LEFTISTS WITH SOME EFFECTIVENESS. END  
SUMMARY.

1. THE LABOR PARTY'S NEC JANUARY 26 VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO CONSIDER THE UNDERHILL REPORT ON EXTREMIST PENETRATION

WHICH HAD BEEN PENDING FOR MORE THAN A YEAR (REF A). IT THEN VOTED, BY 16 TO 10, TO SET UP A SPECIAL AD HOC SUB-COMMITTEE TO REVIEW THE REPORT AND RECOMMEND APPROPRIATE ACTION (THE MOTION WAS MADE BY DEPUTY LEADER MICHAEL FOOT). THIS SUB-COMMITTEE WILL BE CHAIRED BY PARTY CHAIRMAN JOHN CHALMERS. THE REMAINING MEMBERS ARE: FOOT, TOM BRADLEY, MP; ERIC HEFFER, MP; GENERAL SECRETARY RON HAYWARD; AND NATIONAL ORGANIZER REG UNDERHILL, AUTHOR OF THE REPORT.

2. EMBOFF SPOKE TO UNDERHILL FOLLOWING THE NEC MEETING AND FOUND HIM TO BE PLEASED WITH THE NEC'S ACTION AND THE MAKE UP OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE. FOOT, AN ACKNOWLEDGED LEFT-WING LIBERTARIAN WHOSE LOYALTY TO THE GOVERNMENT AND CALLAGHAN HAS BEEN IMPECCABLE, WILL REDUCE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ANY LEFTIST CHALLENGE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS THAT RESULT. WE ALSO UNDERSTAND THAT HE SHARES CALLAGHAN'S CONCERN OVER "MILITANT" FACTION PENETRATION EFFORTS. UNDERHILL, OF COURSE, BELIEVES THE MILITANTS AND OTHER EXTREMISTS MUST BE STOPPED. BRADLEY, A RIGHT-WING TRADE UNIONIST AND FORMER PARTY CHAIRMAN, HAS BEEN A LEADING ADVOCATE OF ACTION TO COUNTER EXTREMISTS, AND HIS POSITION HAS BEEN STRENGTHENED BY THE RECENT WARNINGS OF AFFILIATED UNIONS (REF. B). CHALMERS, A LEFT OF CENTER TRADE UNIONIST, IS GENERALLY RESPONSIVE TO UNION VIEWS. HAYWARD, THOUGH RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ANDY BEVAN APPOINTMENT, IS A POLITICAL CORK FOLLOWING THE PREVAILING CURRENT. HE AFFAIR. THAT LEAVES HEFFER. A LEFT-WINGER AND OUT-SPOKEN ADVOCATE OF "PLURALISM" WITHIN THE PARTY, HE HAD CONFIDENTIAL

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OPPOSED CONSIDERATION OF THE UNDERHILL REPORT. HIS INCLUSION ON THE COMMITTEE, WHILE POSSIBLY DILUTING WHAT-EVER RECOMMENDATIONS EMERGE, WILL REDUCE THE LIKELIHOOD THAT EXTREMISTS CAN MOUNT AN EFFECTIVE ATTACK ON THE COMMITTEE'S FINDINGS. THE COMPOSITION OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE, THOUGH POLITIC IN PARTY TERMS, SUGGESTS THAT ACTION TO COUNTER PENETRATION WILL BE RECOMMENDED.

3. A SPECIAL NEC MEETING JANUARY 19 UNANIMOUSLY CONFIRMED TROTSKYITE ANDY BEVAN'S APPOINTMENT AS PARTY YOUTH ORGANIZER (REF. C). BEVAN RETURNED TO WORK AT TRANSPORT HOUSE THE FOLLOWING DAY. WE UNDERSTAND FROM UNDERHILL, BEVAN'S IMMEDIATE SUPERVISOR, AND FROM HAYWARD, THAT HE WILL BE ON A VERY SHORT LEAD. HIS EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES HAVE ALREADY BEEN SHARPLY CURTAILED, AND HE IS FORBIDDEN TO TAKE ANY POSITION AT VARIANCE WITH OFFICIAL PARTY POLICY. ALTHOUGH SOME PROBLEMS HAVE ALREADY ARISEN, BOTH UNDERHILL AND HAYWARD BELIEVE BEVAN IS TOO INTELLIGENT TO TAKE AN ACTION THAT WOULD RESULT

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IN HIS BEING DISCHARGED DURING HIS 90-DAY PROBATIONARY PERIOD. BEYOND THAT TIMEFRAME' THE PROSPECTS ARE UNPREDICTABLE, ACCORDING TO UNDERHILL. IF BEVAN ERRS, HE BELIEVES IT WILL PROBABLY BE BECAUSE HE OVERESTIMATES HIS SUPPORT ON THE NEC. UNDERHILL IS CONFIDENT THAT IN THE EVENT OF A SHOWDOWN, THE NEC WOULD SUPPORT HIM OVER BEVAN. ON THE OTHER HAND, BOTH UNDERHILL AND HAYWARD BELIEVE THERE IS AN OUTSIDE CHANCE THAT TIME AND EXPERIENCE WILL CAUSE BEVAN TO MODERATE HIS VIEWS' BECOMING AN EFFECTIVE AND RELIABLE PARTY OFFICIAL. BUT UNTIL THAT SEEMINGLY IMPROBABLE TIME, THE WATCHWORD WILL BE CAUTION.

5. EDUCATION SECRETARY SHIRLEY WILLIAMS, ONE OF THE NEC'S MOST DIRECT AND ARTICULATE RIGHT-WINGERS, JANUARY 21 SERVED NOTICE THAT SHE IS PREPARED TO RESIST EXTREMIST PENETRATION OF THE PARTY. SPEAKING TO A PARTY AUDIENCE. SHE RESOUNDINGLY CONDEMNED THOSE WHO ARGUE THAT TROTSKYISM IS MERELY ANOTHER THREAD IN THE LABOR PARTY'S RICH AND VARIEGATED IDEOLOGICAL TAPESTRY. "MODERN TROTSKYISM'S VISION OF SOCIALISM", SHE SAID, "HAS NOTHING  
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TO DO WITH THE BRITISH LABOR PARTY'S VISION...(AS IT)  
HOLDS LIBERTY AND DEMOCRACY IN TOTAL CONTEMPT".

6. JANUARY 23 BROUGHT FURTHER GOOD NEWS FOR THE MODERATES. RIGHT-WING MP NEVILLE SANDELSON, A FOUNDER OF THE MANIFESTO GROUP, DEFEATED WHAT APPEARED TO BE A CONSTITUENCY LEVEL, EXTREMIST-SPONSORED ATTEMPT TO DENY HIM RENOMINATION. WITH THE SUPPORT OF CALLAQHAN, DEMOCRATIC LEFTISTS SUCH AS FOOT AND NEIL KINNOCK, AND PARTY GENERAL SECRETARY HAYWARD, SANDELSON'S SUPPORTERS PREVAILED BY A 24 TO 21 VOTE IN THE CONSTITUENCY PARTY'S MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE. WHILE THE EXTREMISTS' GUNS HAVE SILENCED FOR NOW, SANDELSON WILL HAVE TO WORK HARD TO IMPROVE HIS SERVICES TO HIS CONSTITUENTS IF HE IS TO STAY OUT OF TROUBLE IN THE FUTURE.

7. FINALLY, EXTREME LEFT-WING NEC MEMBER JOAN MAYNARD, MP' CAME UNDER SHARP CRITICISM FROM HER SPONSORING UNION, THE AGRICULTURAL WORKERS, FOR HER CONTINUAL SUPPORT OF RADICAL POSITIONS AND CRITICISM OF THE GOVERNMENT. (UNDERHILL DESCRIBES HER AS A NICE PERSON WHO PARROTS THE MORNING STAR LINE WHENEVER SHE OPENS HER MOUTH IN PUBLIC.)

8. COMMENT. ON BALANCE IT WAS A VINTAGE WEEK FOR THE MODERATES, AND CLEARLY ONE OF THE BEST THEY HAVE ENJOYED FOR A LONG TIME. WHILE EACH OF THE ABOVE EVENTS WAS DISCRETE, THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT THE CONCERNS AND WARNINGS RECENTLY EXPRESSED BY LEADERS OF AFFILIATED TRADE UNIONS (REF. B) WERE AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN THE NEC'S DECISION ON THE UNDERHILL REPORT, IN SANDELSON'S SUCCESS AND IN MAYNARD'S DIFFICULTIES. THE MODERATES, HOWEVER, STILL HAVE SOME WAY TO GO, AND IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER THEIR RESURGENCE CAN BE SUSTAINED AND THE UNIONS' CONCERN TRANSLATED INTO VOTES IN THIS YEAR'S NEC ELECTIONS.

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## Message Attributes

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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009